

Why are roundabouts safer?

Drivers are required to reduce their speeds as they approach, enter, and move within a roundabout, whereas those in an intersection may feel encouraged by the green or yellow light to accelerate to get across quickly and “beat” the red light. The only movement possible at a roundabout entry or exit is a right turn, which reduces the potential frequency and severity of accidents which typically occur during left turns and when traffic crosses an intersection in perpendicular directions.

Are roundabouts safe near schools and residences for the elderly?

Roundabouts increase the safety of schoolchildren and the elderly by making it easier for them to cross a street with the use of the center island. Cars are required to yield to pedestrians at all times, and the slower speeds encourage caution at the intersection when pedestrians are in the vicinity.

What do I do if an emergency vehicle follows me into a roundabout?

If you enter a roundabout and notice an emergency vehicle behind you, simply continue around the roundabout to the nearest exit and pull off to the side as usual. Pulling to the side within the roundabout may not give such vehicles the clearance they need and could prevent them from reaching their destination as quickly.

How about bicycling through a roundabout?

The speed of a car through a roundabout is typically 15 to 20 mph—close to the speed of a bicycle. Cyclists can choose to either circulate as vehicles or use the sidewalk around the roundabout. When circulating as a vehicle, cyclists should ride near the middle of the lane so that drivers can see them and will not attempt to pass.

Educate yourself about roundabouts

Education is vital to the acceptance and success of roundabouts. Navigating a roundabout is easy, but because people can be uncomfortable with new things, it's important for community members to educate themselves about roundabout use. Just remember these basic tips:

1. Slow down.
2. Yield to traffic already in the circle.
3. Obey one-way signs at all times.
4. Watch for pedestrians and bicycles throughout.
5. Turn left by circling around the center island and making a right turn to exit from the roundabout.

Roundabouts:
The more you build, the less you get...
...less congestion,
...less frustration,
...less pollution,
...less expense,
...fewer and less severe traffic collisions,
...fewer pedestrian and driver injuries



King County

Department of Transportation
Road Services Division

**Community Relations
and Communications**

KSC-TR-0824
201 S. Jackson St.
Seattle, WA 98104

www.kingcounty.gov/roads

All about roundabouts



***Tips and
guidelines
for drivers,
pedestrians
and bicyclists***



King County

Department of Transportation
Road Services Division

Driving through a roundabout

Modern roundabouts are a new form of intersection in the U.S. that provide safe and efficient traffic flow. Vehicles travel counterclockwise around a raised center island, with entering traffic yielding the right-of-way to circulating traffic. This slows speeds and aids the smooth movement of vehicles into, around and out of the roundabout.

DRIVING TIPS:



SLOW down. A speed of 15 mph or less is appropriate throughout the roundabout.



LOOK for pedestrians at the crosswalks as you approach and exit the roundabout. Stop for pedestrians; they have the right-of-way.



YIELD to all vehicles in the roundabout. Look to your left and wait for a gap in the circulating traffic before entering.



ENTER the roundabout. Once in the circulating lane, do not stop and do not overtake vehicles ahead of you.



EXIT the roundabout in the direction of your destination. Street signs are posted to guide you.

Benefits of a roundabout

Fewer and less-serious crashes

The circular flow of traffic eliminates head-on and "T-bone" collisions. The angles of traffic interaction and slower speeds through the roundabout reduce the severity of accidents.

Environmentally friendly

The continuous flow of vehicles consumes less fuel, emits fewer pollutants and produces less noise than occurs when vehicles stop and then accelerate at a signal or stop sign.

Increased traffic flow

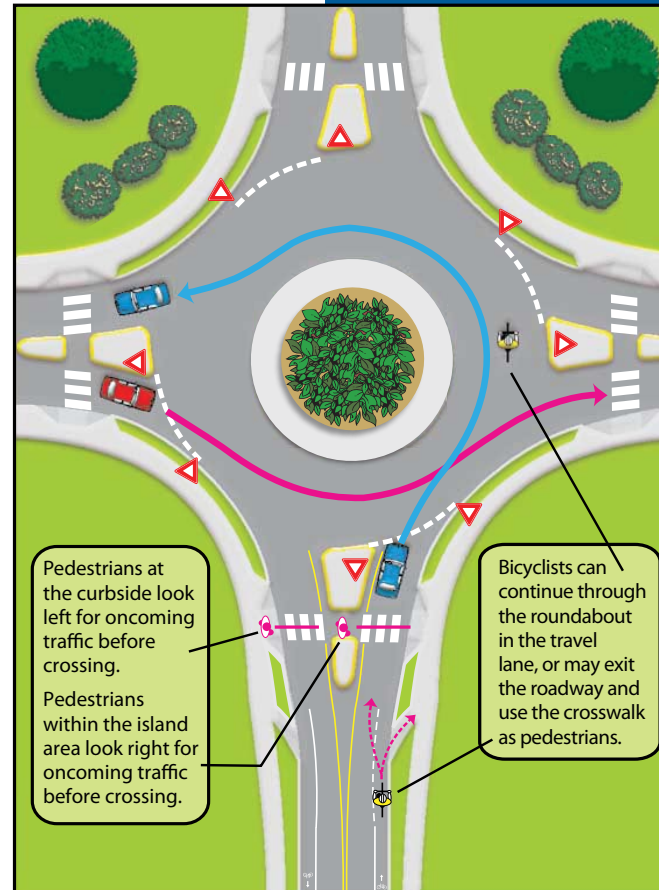
Overall, more traffic can flow through a roundabout than through a conventional intersection with its stop-and-go traffic.

Cost-efficient

Compared to a traditional intersection with traffic signals, the roundabout is less costly to operate.

Aesthetically pleasing

The roundabout center islands can feature landscaping, flowering plants and even sculptures.



Frequently asked questions

Isn't the roundabout just another traffic circle?

Modern roundabouts have more to offer than the traffic circles of old, including traffic-calming features that force drivers to reduce their speeds through the intersection. The roundabouts are also designed to reduce the number of conflict points and left turns, thus increasing safety. And contrary to popular belief, you can't get lost in a roundabout.

Why not just install a traffic signal?

While traffic signals continue to be suitable for many intersections, some intersections benefit significantly from roundabouts which reduce vehicle speeds through the intersections and allow pedestrians to cross a single lane of traffic at a time. Roundabouts also eliminate traffic signal operation and maintenance costs.

Continued on back